DOD/NGO Relations and

Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations

in sub-Saharan Africa

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Following the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the context of today's warfare has changed dramatically. The US finds herself engaged in struggles against nebulous enemies with no concept of or desire to "fight fair". On September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda aptly demonstrated their lack of restraint in warfare by turning civilian planes full of innocent people into guided missiles directed at civilian institutions. On a smaller scale, they have regularly recruited and indiscriminately employed suicide bombers against local populations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Terror tactics are a weapon of the weak used to bring attention to a perceived injustice or cause. The attention generated aids in the recruiting of like-minded followers to that cause until its support gains enough parity with its opponent to meet force with force. For instance, terrorists like Al Qaeda are prepared to wage a long war against the West in an attempt to establish a new Muslim Caliphate in the Middle East. This type of asymmetric threat arguably represents the nature of warfare for Department of Defense (DOD) forces for the foreseeable future. DOD personnel must now equip, train, and organize to fight against a threat which does not respect state boundaries and shows no compunctions against indiscriminant use of violence (i.e. terrorism) to achieve their goals against a superior conventional power. In this long war, Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations tend to recruit and draw support from disenfranchised youths throughout the Muslim world. DOD forces can significantly decrease the recruitment base of terrorist organizations through strategic public health partnerships with NGOs in unstable or failing Muslim states.

The Problem

In a speech to Air Command and Staff College, a senior US ambassador and long time emissary to the Middle East defined an area they termed the "broader Middle East". This area encompassed the Muslim nations from Morocco in the west to Afghanistan and Pakistan in East.[1] This observation is significant because of the religious affiliations it implies. More significantly, the "broader Middle East" encompasses a large section of sub-Saharan, African nations. Many of these sub-Saharan nations are classified as failed or failing states.[2] These states represent an enormous threat to US and allied security because of the fertile terrorist recruiting grounds they portend. Massive human rights violations and hard-line authoritarian regimes are the most likely result of a failed state.[3] In Darfur, Sudan from February 2003 to October 2007, the US government had confirmed the destruction of over 2,000 villages.[4] These villages had been systematically destroyed as part of an unofficial genocide campaign through proxy militias allowed to operate with tacit Sudanese governmental approval. Between 1998 and 2003, the Democratic Republic of Congo provinces of South Kivu and Kalemie had 51,000 cases of rape reported. Systematic rape was being used as an instrument of war.[5] Unfortunately, the conditions within failed sub-Saharan states like Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo have been exacerbated by the effects of globalization.

Globalization is the interdependency and layers of connectedness around the world, brought about by revolutions in technology, communications, and transportation.[6] This effect is seen as a panacea to world hunger and poverty by some and a path to perpetual conflict by others. The effects of globalization are mixed and highlight the importance of good governance in adopting policies designed to integrate their country's economy with the global economy. "A 1998 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concluded that open-trading states grew on average twice as fast as those relatively closed to trade."[7] A

lack of responsible and effective governance is the primary cause of failed or failing states. The seeming inequity in benefits created by globalization and trade practices lends itself to a culture clash between East and West, or Muslim extremists and non-Muslims. However, economic prosperity is not the only result of globalization.

Globalization has enhanced the ability of terrorist organizations to recruit and finance their long wars against the West. Sub-Saharan Africa represents an enormous potential for recruitment of future suicide bombers. It also provides ample human capital and demand for illegal operations like weapons, drug, or human trafficking.[8] These illegal operations provide enormous amounts of revenue for financing terrorist activities. Estimates place the value of human trafficking and sexual exploitation alone at $850 million dollars per year.[9] Corrupt governance, internet anonymity, porous borders, and ease of networking through global communication allow terrorist organizations to flourish in these environments. The US and its allies must focus efforts on sub-Saharan Africa in the form of stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations to begin to address the effects of ineffective and irresponsible governance.

The True Nature of the Problem

The chaotic nature of a failed state's power structure is often unpredictable and inherently unsecure. Governments are ineffective because they do not provide for the needs of their people and their people are forced to look for other options to survive. Further insight into the dynamic of ineffective government can be seen through the eyes of Abraham Maslow, a prominent humanistic psychologist. Maslow defined a hierarchy of needs which builds a person toward self-actualization. He postulated the most basic of human needs as physiological. "These are biological needs. They consist of needs for oxygen, food, water, and a relatively constant body

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temperature. *They are the strongest needs because if a person were deprived of all needs, the physiological ones would come first in the person's search for satisfaction.*"(emphasis added) Maslow further postulates that once physiological needs are met, a person progresses to a need for safety, and then to their highest needs for belonging, love and affection.[10] This sense of belonging is usually found among those persons who can provide basic needs and security, and thus contribute to a group identity. Effective governments rely upon their population's identification with their provision of basic needs in a secure environment to remain in power without constant threat of revolt. Failed states usually result in hard-line authoritarian regimes because these regimes seize the initiative in monopolizing access to the resources for meeting people's needs. The needs of the people are met through irresponsible, selfish, and corrupt means. Usually the result of such governance is horrific human rights violations because people rebel against the perverse nature of their provider, and the authoritarian regime sees coercion and intimidation as their only means to remain in power. Understanding this hierarchy of needs is the key to developing stable, effective government within an area. This hierarchy of needs illustrates the potential synergistic efforts of DOD and non-governmental organizations (NGO) relations.

The Direction

DOD Instruction 3000.05, dated 28 November 2005, expressly defines stability operations as "military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States and regions."[11] It further specifies a critical need for civil-military teams designed to integrate and interface with International Governmental Organizations (IGOs), NGOs, and the private sector in an effort to coordinate the effects of stability operations. A large number of NGOs, and several powerful philanthropists like Bill and

Melinda Gates, are deeply involved in improving the world's public health. A task force commissioned by the Center for Strategic and International Studies illustrates the desire of powerful US people to tackle the global food crisis. The commission sees this crisis as a "moral and humanitarian threat, developmental threat, and *strategic threat*."(emphasis added) [12] They advocate strong US leadership within the context of world organizations, and strengthening organizational capacities to tackle these threats. [13] The impetus and opportunity to develop new partnerships between military and civil organizations is in place in Washington. There are no less than twenty-two US governmental programs and organizations dedicated to tackling strategic public health issues with national security implications. A few of these programs and organizations include the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization, and Millennium Challenge Corporation.[14] Now more than ever, the military recognizes the need for strong relations with grassroots organizations already working in troubled areas like sub-Saharan Africa. NGO and DOD relations must work past the traditional stereotypes associated with each side of the relationship into an appreciation for the expertise and capabilities provided by each partner in the team.

The Solution

Because the governments of failed states have usually lost their monopoly on use of violence for maintaining law and order, a secure environment must be set by DOD forces. It must be noted that the main assumption for this proposed solution is the complete lack of responsible governance due to corruption, ineptitude, or lack of a formalized structure. The amount and type of forces will be dictated by a country's geography, amount and type of violence present, as well as latent capabilities within the host nation's populace. For instance, a small force of special operations units trained in executing Foreign Internal Defense (FID)

missions may be sufficient to bolster the latent capabilities of an otherwise capable military and law enforcement apparatus. However, if no latent capabilities exist, or widespread violence has erupted a more robust force may be required to secure a nation's borders and interior. Once an area is secure enough such that NGOs or private organizations can begin to work with reasonable assurance their lives will not be lost, further stability operations can be undertaken with a mixture of NGOs, private sector philanthropists, and military capabilities. The goal of this partnership is to bring to bear valuable human resources with even more valuable knowledge of the local context.[15]

In sub-Saharan Africa, many basic public health needs Westerners take for granted are not met on a daily basis. Access to water and food is not a guarantee. For instance, relatively simple tools to ensure clean water are difficult to access, and contribute to diarrheal disease, the second most common cause of childhood deaths globally.[16] In most of these sub-Saharan failing states, food insecurity in the form of poor production, poor distribution, or corruption has resulted in malnourishment levels well above those of stable African states, 35% versus 23%. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, malnourishment levels have soared to 76%.[17] Access to food and clean water can be helped via IGO, NGO, and private sector capabilities. These organizations can educate farmers on new growing techniques for arid climates, or be incentivized to produce a seed crop suited for growth in sub-Saharan Africa. New irrigation techniques or well drilling techniques can be introduced to improve access to clean water. However, food and water are not the only areas public health makes impacts. The power of meeting these needs cannot be underestimated. General Stanley McChrystal, commander of NATO's ISAF forces, illustrates the impact of providing clean water in Afghanistan during his speech to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. He says,

"If you build a well in the wrong place in a village, you may have shifted the basis of power in that village. If you tap into underground water, you give power to the owner of that well that they did not have before, because the traditional irrigation system was community-owned. If you dig a well and contract it to one person or group over another, you make a decision that, perhaps in your ignorance, tips the balance of power, or perception thereof, in that village."[18]

While this statement is made in the context of Afghanistan, it demonstrates the tremendous impact meeting basic needs has upon local power structures and, in turn, the government.

Stability operations cannot solely focus on physiological needs. Human development is critical to good governance and it begins in the home. As mentioned previously, women and children are often the soft target in many sub-Saharan states. Therefore, education targeted at women and children will pay large dividends in the stability process. Better education at these levels produces better fertility rates among women, and affects the well-being of the entire household to include children. In addition, educating young boys and youths reduces the attraction of illegal activities such as drug and human trafficking. In the end, a better educated population increases the worker pool for the country, and inherently creates more jobs as viable alternatives to rebellious activities.[19] In efforts to stabilize a region, other education alternatives may be viable options for segments of a country's population. Instituting exchange programs with Western schools and universities can broaden awareness of possibilities, and raise the level of trust between East and West. However, education is not the only area that affects a stable home.

In an agricultural society, domesticated animals are as much a part of the family as children. Therefore, veterinary capabilities must be incorporated into stabilization efforts. Animal health is critical to the social and economic well-being of an area. Military veterinarians

partnering with NGOs, and training indigenous veterinarians will affect these states in a long term and sustainable manner through awareness of herd vaccination techniques, and other animal health protocols.[20] Medical professionals from civilian and military backgrounds can work to bolster a country's military medical infrastructure and civilian care. Ultimately, a healthy law enforcement force, and military force is more effective at maintaining stability in a country than a force worried about the effects of a wound sustained in service to their state.[21]

Conclusion

The US military faces a current warfare context dramatically different from conventional warfare. DOD personnel must understand their role in defeating this new nebulous threat. A culture clash has emerged between Muslim extremists and non-Muslims. Many see the current struggle against Al Qaeda as a global counterinsurgency. One area of concern for the US is sub-Saharan Africa because of its Muslim roots and dramatic unrest. Globalization has given terrorist organizations the ability to flow across borders with little regard to state support. They can recruit anonymously, and adequately finance their long war against the US. Globalization has exacerbated the economic gap between developed countries with effective governance, and developing nations with ineffective or corrupt governments. This effect has given terrorist groups an easy avenue for recruitment of disenfranchised youths. Terrorists are prone to use indiscriminant violence to achieve their goals, and the US must be prepared to attack their strategic center of gravity. Through strong working relationships between DOD, private sector, and NGO personnel, the US can significantly impact the recruitment base for terrorist organizations by removing their sources of disenfranchisement. Specifically, these working relationships can provide access to clean water, secure food sources, human medical care, animal care, and education. Provision of basic needs and a secure environment are the building blocks

of society. With these blocks as a foundation, education can further build toward stability, good

governance, and a greater society.

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1 CSS Lecture, 3 November 2009

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3 Ibid, 37.

4 Darfur, Sudan: Confirmed Damaged and Destroyed Villages, February 2003-October 2007, http://investorsagainstgenocide.net/DarfurVillages-gov-usa_DMG_sdn071205.jpg, accessed 9 September 2009.

5 Overcoming Fragility, 47.

6 Lui Hebron and John F. Stack, Jr., Globalization: Debunking the Myths, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2009), 3.

7 Ibid, 42.

8 Overcoming Fragility, 47.

9 Ibid.

10 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/maslow.htm, accessed 21 October 2009.

11 Department of Defense (DOD) Instruction 3000.05. Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations, 16 September 2009.

12 J. Stephen Morrison and Johanna Nesseth Tuttle, "A Call for a Strategic US approach to the Global Food Crisis", (Center for Strategic and International Studies: July 2008), 3.

13 Ibid, 9.

14 Eugene Bonventre, Kathleen Hicks, and Stacy Okutani, "US National Security and Global Health," (Center for Strategic and International Studies: April 2009), 22-24.

15 Overcoming Fragility, 184.

16 Christopher J. Elias, "Policies and Practices to Advance Global Health Technologies," (Center for Strategic and International Studies: April 2009), 2.

17 Overcoming Fragility, 45.

18 RealClearPolitics – Gen McChrystal's speech on Afghanistan, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/10/01/gen_mcchrystals_address_on_afghanistan_98537.html, accessed 17 November 2009.

19 Overcoming Fragility, 186.

20 Bonventre, Hicks, and Okutani, 19.

21 Ibid, 16.